

THE ART ALBUM.

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SIXTEEN FACSIMILES

OF

WATER-COLOUR DRAWINGS

BY

GEORGE CATTERMOLE, T. SIDNEY COOPER, A.R.A., EDWARD DUNCAN, JOHN GILBERT, WILLIAM HUNT,

R. P. LEITCH, GEORGE SMITH, GEORGE H. THOMAS, MRS. WARD, HENRY WARREN.

EDWARD H. WEHNERT, HARRISON WEIR, AND H. B. WILLIS.

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The Stepping Stones.



THE stepping stones!—how many memories waken
At the mere mention of a little word!
Voices hush'd long ago are once more heard,
Thoughts quickly rise which you had far forsaken:
That which the mind once gains is never taken,
But lieth hidden till by chance 'tis stirr'd.
The flowers droop and die 'neath Winter's frost,
Only to live again with earliest Spring;
And in the Winter of the heart no thing,
Though dead and buried, ever can be lost.
How many years have flown since last I cross'd!
Yet clearly do I hear the low sweet tones,
And feel the pressure of the tiny palm,
Which laid in mine all trembling, it so calm,
When last I ventured o'er the stepping stones.





A Breeze off Shore.



FAIR fresh breeze—above, a smiling sky—
The tired sea-birds sleep upon the waves ;
Sleeping beneath them in their sea-weed graves
Lie many gallant hearts ; the boats bound by,
Each speeds along on its own mission bent,
Nor is a thought to dread or danger lent ;
For who could dream that this same quiet sea,
Now rocking to and fro so peacefully,
Doth oft in Winter nights with thunder roar,
Leap wildly forth, and beat against the shore,
And bury deep beneath its madden'd foam
The strength and pride of many a sailor's home ?
Ocean ! thy face, like man's, is full of guile—
Anger lies often hid beneath thy smile.



The Baron's Chapel.



WE think too often of the olden time
As one of war and bloodshed ; for thus tell,
In words severely simple, yet sublime,
The stirring strains of many a minstrel's rhyme,
In which more loudly doth the war-note swell
Than the faint tinkling of the tiny bell,
Calling on all men with its silvery chime
To worship God within the fair chapelle ;
Where gather'd every Sabbath night, I ween,
Baron and damo, and knight and squire be seen,
And the poor peasant not set far apart,
With heads all list'ning bent, and reverent mien,
Solemn and stately, yet with humbled heart,
And moisten'd eye, whence tears of deep repentance start.



Winter.



WINTER'S morn !—some say that all looks blank,
And harsh, and dreary,—but not so say I ;
I love the cold grey grandeur of the sky,
The crystal beauties of the frosty bank ;
I find no sorrow in the naked tree,
Stretching its bare arms boldly to the wind,
Like Samson, shorn of locks, indeed, and blind,
Yet brave of heart and full of majesty.
No sad sight are the over-patient sheep,
Lying so meekly on the frozen snow ;
They wait resignedly, like all below,
Until the kindly Earth, refresh'd by sleep,
Shall once again awake, mild breezes blow,
And forth each little bud and flower shall peep.



The Marriage of Griselda.



HER hair have they kempt, that lay untressed
Full rudely, and with their fingers small
A coroune on her head they have ydressed,
And set her full of nouches great and small :

Of her array why should I make a tale?
Scarcely the people knew her, for her fairness,
When she transformed was in such richness.

The marquis hath her 'sponsored with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and then her set
Upon a horse snow-white and well ambling,
And to his palace, ere he longer let,
(With joyful people, that her led and met,)
Conveyed her, and thus the day they spend
In revel, till the sun 'gan to descend.

CHAUCER.



Lucy.



N Youth, Life's happy Spring-time, all is gay,
Then pleasures please, nor yet have power to cloy;
The youth of the year the fullest is of joy,
All Nature hails with song the rising day.

Why then, O gentle maiden, gazest thou,

With sorrow casting gloom upon thine eyes,

As if thou would'st from off the Future's brow

Raise the dark veil which Time alone bids rise?

Days *may* be hid, when thou shalt bow thy head

Meekly beneath a mighty sorrow's tread—

When even tears shall seem forbid to start,

So heavy lies the load around thine heart.

Yet let thy fears away; take Hope instead,

And live in joy through thy sweet Summer time;

So calm shall be the Autumn of thy prime,

And Life's stern Winter bring to thee no dread.



Carting Brushwood.



ONE is the glory of the Summer land ;
The fields, once golden with the waving corn,
Stand bare and lifeless, of that beauty shorn ;
On all hath Autumn laid his heavy hand :
The shrinking leaves hang reddening to their fall,
And shower in myriads at each breeze's call ;
And overhead the Winter wind will soon
Through the bare branches roar in hoarse wild tune.
Now, safely housed within some hollow tree,
The little squirrel piles his hard-earn'd store,
That through the cold he may live merrily :
Man profits by the squirrel's untaught lore,
And gathereth fuel, that before the bold
And ruddy blaze may vanish Winter's cold.



The Gardener's Daughter.



OR up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade!—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the beauteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

TENNYSON.

The Goldfinch.



OLDFINCH, pride of woodland glade,
In thy jet and gold array'd ;
Gentle bird, that lov'st to feed
On the thistle's downy seed ;
Freely frolic, lightly sing,
In the sunbeam spread thy wing !
Spread thy plumage, trim and gay,
Glittering in the noontide ray,
As upon the thorn-tree's stem
Perch'd, thou sipp'st the dewy gem.
'Fickle bird, for ever roving,
Endless changes ever loving ;
Now in orchards gaily sporting,
Now to flow'ry fields resorting ;
Chasing now the thistle's down,
By the gentle zephyr blown :
Lightly on thou wing'st thy way,
Always happy, always gay.



THE SUPPLIANT

The Suppliant.



AND thou must leave us for a while; no more that fair young form
Shall lighten up our fireside, like sunshine after storm;
No more at early morning time will thy loved voice's tone
Trill through the dewy air as sweet as 'twere the lintie's own;
The suppliant, who at thy side now beggeth anxiously,
No more shall come, with eager bound, to ask his food from thee;
No more with low beseeching whine shall glance up to thy face,—
Far other suppliant shall fill his long accustom'd place.
Yet may thy step bound light and free, still may thy laugh ring clear,
Though other haunts shall claim that step, that laugh glad others' ear;
May through thy Summer shine Love's sun, or, if it ere should set,
May the full moon of Hope and Peace soften thy keen regret.
Rare runs a life through happily, and if not so with thee,
Still may thy breast from sorrow caused by thine own sin be free;
And if thy tears shall sometimes fall, may they ne'er cause a stain,
But leave thee like the Summer hills, the lovelier after rain.
May Autumn's sad and sombre hue not harm thy joy's deep root,
But make thy blessedness more bless'd, as flower turns to fruit;
And may the Winter frost of Age rest kindly on thy brow,
Thy heart be ever green as Youth, though white thy head as snow;
And may'st thou always still through life find friends as strong and tried,
As firm and free, and true to thee, as him now by thy side.



HAPPY DAYS.

Happy Days.



STRANGE, as you look upon a little child,
To think of all the power of good or ill,
The strength of doing either as he will,
Which lieth hid behind his brow so mild ;—
That from this little spring may wander forth
A brattling mountain-torrent fierce and wild,
Or a sweet river may from it be fill'd
With power to Bless and to enrich the earth.
Will he be satisfied to live unknown,
As lived his sire, in the dull rustic round—
First weary till, then lie beneath, the ground,
Unloved, uncared for, saving by his own ;
Or, spurning at so poor though safe a fate,
Aim at a larger portion in the State?
Men have, ere this, been call'd from the plough
To fill a lofty station—so may he ;
Or live his village life contentedly,
With fewer wrinkles gather'd round his brow.



THE SAILOR BOY.

The Sailor Boy.



REAMS of the Past and Future—which are falsest?

We all have both, and if we had them not,

Then thrice unhappy were our earthly lot.

. Dreaming in Youth of days which shall be rarest

In choicest blessings, when we have grown old ;

Dreaming in Age of Youth's time, still the dearest,

Of scenes more lasting we shall soon behold.

Thus dreaming on, our little lives we spend,

And ever float along Life's rapid stream,

Until we near the ever-nearing end,

And hear the murmuring of Time's sad sea

Beating the dim shore of Eternity :

Then true alone things of the Future seem,

Things Past and Present but a night's short dream.



The Peri.



ONE morn a Peri at the gate
Of Eden stood, disconsolate ;
And as she listen'd to the Springs
Of Life within, like music flowing,
And caught the light upon her wings
Through the half-open portal glowing,
She wept to think her recreant race
Should e'er have lost that glorious place !

" How happy," exclaim'd this child of air,
" Are the holy spirits who wander there,
'Mid flowers that never shall fade or fall ;
Though mine are the gardens of earth and sea,
And the stars themselves have flowers for me,
One blossom of Heaven out-blooms them all !"

MOORE.

